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Four Sorcerers



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Chapter 1 by Líneas&Doublespeak

Elder Horrock concentrated his will towards the burning coals in the hearth, and the fire around them resurged. Autumn was slowly falling to the icy grip of winter and an old mage such as himself needed to keep warm.

Maestra Scillin stood before him waiting patiently. Her greying hair was pulled back too tight from her face and it gave her face a permanent look of distaste. Elder Horrock wanted a moment to consider before throwing himself into this, but his deputy could not, and would not wait a moment longer.

~ Sir, we need to deal with this situation now ~ Her voice was strange and echoed around the inside of his head, as if it was one of his own thoughts. Horrock knew that if she was using her powers on him, something which he had gently but firmly forbidden when they had first started working together at the college, that she was deadly serious. Elder Horrock sighed and settled down further into his plush chair.

"Send him in."

Horrock's eyes were tightly closed, his gaze completely focused on the old chair he was sitting in. He did not speak again until he heard the door open and the sound of boots walking across the floor. "See more of Story Wars and our other great stories." "Elder Scillin," he said, his voice low and weary.

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In fact, it was less sidling than limping. A gash ran down his cheek, jarring the eye on what would have been a handsome face framed under long, sandy locks. His pale college uniform was tattered and covered in dark stains and his leg was bandaged heavily.

The two professors waited in silence as the mage hobbled across the room and came to a silent stop before his head master.

"Please, sit," Elder Horrock said, motioning to the chair opposite him, "Alfred, is it?"

"Alfreck, professor," came the youth's respectful and wary reply. Elder Horrock smiled at his student, trying to put the boy at ease.

"And what is your speciality, Alfreck?" he asked in his most soothing voice. Alfreck hesitated a moment, as if unsure of his answer.

"I'm a luxcaller, sir."

"Ah yes," the elder mused, "I remember you now, it was you who did that marvelous display at last year's end of term celebration, was it not?" A small, nervous smile flashed briefly across Alfreck's face, before falling back to an ashen stare.

"Yes, that was me,"

"It was wonderful," Elder Horrock added, remembering the pride he felt each year as the college gave a formal farewell to the graduating students.

"Thank you, sir." Alfreck replied, he was clearly still uncomfortable, and Elder Horrock knew that Maestra Scillin was right, they needed to handle this situation quickly.

"Alfreck," the elder mage began, "I'll be plain with you. Maestra Scillin and I are greatly concerned about the information you've provided us so far. We..." he paused, looking for the right word.

"I do not know how a mid level mage to the school can think like this. We need the truth of the matter. And most importantly, we need to know where our missing companions died!"

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Alfreck looked unsure of his next words, Elder Horrock could see him thinking deeply about how to explain this situation.

"It just came out of no-where" He looked up to meet the Elder's gaze, his eyes round and frightened.

Elder Horrock stared at him for a moment, pressing in to see how truthful this boy was.

If truth betold all he had to do was reach out and touch the boy on the forehead to see the events recalled but he needed to hear it form in the boy's own word's first.

Elder Horrock nodded and motioned him to continue.

"I.. I don't know what it was sir but it happened so suddenly" Alfreck stammered.

"Start from the beginning" Maestra Scillin offered gently.

"Well we had heard of... things living in the woods, sir. We thought it would be well, funny to see if there was anything really there. I didn't believe the rumours sir. I had planned to scare them myself, like a trick. We walked along the main path towards the fort and then I let myself linger behind, I hid behind a tree and then out of nowhere..." He gulped and let his gaze wander around the room.

"I don't even know how to describe it. The smell came first, of rot and decay. Dampness..." He shook his head and fingered the bandages on his leg then let his hand fall limp at his sides.

"Then it was well black" Alfreck finished.

Maestra Scillin and Elder Horrock exchanged glances. Without using any mind reading they had both come to the same conclusion.

Alfreck missed the exchange of looks his head buried in his hands. He began to weep.

"Now now it'll be alright" Elder Horrock offered, he nodded at Maestra Scillin, "take him to the medical wing" He said, "then call a meeting with the staff".

Alfreck with muddled thoughts and a heavy heart from the room, he headed off to his husband weeping now more.

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Elder Horrock sat in his chair

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The tower wing piercing through the misty clouds, the cold air crackling

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